Action Step IIb.1.2: Develop evaluation reports to analyze use of the CANS tool to improve provision of educational, physical and mental health services to children, as well as services to parents.
Evidence of Completion: Summary of evaluation reports
Action Step IIb.1.3: Develop evaluation plan to analyze use of the CANS tool to improve provision of educational, physical and mental health services to children, as well as services to parents.
Evidence of Completion: Evaluation plan

LOC Implementation: CANS and Licensing Practices Evaluation Plan

Introduction
The purpose of the Levels of Care (LOC) initiative is to improve stability, safety, matching and permanence of children by matching their assessed needs with the skills, abilities, and capacities of caregivers. In order to evaluate the LOC initiative several components of the new system shall be analyzed. The division will utilize qualitative and quantitative measures to evaluate: the conversion of Court Ordered Kinship Care (COKC) cases to Foster Care (FC) licensing; monitoring outcomes and consistency of foster care licensing practices statewide; and the implementation of the CANS tool.

Portions of this analysis are required as part of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), however not all of the items under evaluation are included in the PIP. The division is committed to evaluating the entire LOC initiative to continue to improve service provision and support to children and families, to monitor the expected outcomes of the initiative, and to make any necessary adjustments and modifications where necessary. In addition to the evaluation, the division is supporting the initiative through a number of resources, trainings, and technical assistance that is not included in this evaluation plan.

Improving Permanency, Safety, and Well-Being of Children in Foster Care
To improve permanency, safety, and well-being for children in foster care the division is making several assumptions that are supported by evidence based practices. The assumptions include:
- When children can be safely placed with relatives the placements are more stable and children achieve permanence sooner.
- Children whose needs are assessed, planned for, and matched with the caregiver they are placed with have fewer placement disruptions and improved well-being outcomes because the caregiver is able to meet the child's needs either directly or with the assistance of additional supports and services.
- Caregivers who are properly supported to meet the needs of children placed with them are more likely to continue to care for a child, be willing to be a permanence option for the child, and for non-related foster parents be willing to continue to foster additional children.
- Caregivers who are properly supported and whose needs are assessed in relation to a child placed with them are less likely to maltreat a child placed with them.

I.   **Conversion of Court Ordered Kinship Care to Foster Care Licensing Process**

The first phase of the LOC initiative involved a change that improved access to foster care licensing for relative caregivers receiving a COKC payment. The division is currently monitoring the legacy cases through the LOC Monitoring report and will monitor new conversions via the Licensing Monitoring report. The reports allow county agencies and DCF to monitor the timeliness of conversion, the foster care licensing decision, and the reasons for both withdrawals and denials. Central office staff and the Bureau of Regional Operations will utilize this report to work with county agencies to ensure timeliness of conversion is occurring, to understand and analyze why relative caregivers are not licensed, and to analyze if additional training or technical support is needed in improving access and consistency to foster care licensing for relative caregivers.

II.   Placement Stability

The second phase of the LOC initiative introduced the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool, completion of the certification process for all foster parents, and integration of mandated foster parent training requirements. The implementation of the CANS tool will be evaluated in terms of improving placement stability.

Several questions related to placement stability will be evaluated through the use of administrative data and focus groups by review at different layers in the system: the family and child, program level, and system wide.

A. Placement Matching and Support of Caregivers

1. *Are agencies completing the CANS timely?*

In order to answer any of the proceeding questions that generate data from the CANS tool with accuracy, the division needs to ensure that CANS are being completed timely. The CANS Timeliness report provides information regarding the timeliness of completion of the CANS within 30 days of placement, the Level of Need of children, and the outcome of the Mental Health screen. The division will be working with BRO staff to integrate all of the reports into regional supervisor meetings and technical assistance plans to ensure the timeliness of assessment is completed.

2. *Is the algorithm for Level of Need accurate for the child and their needs?*

The division will use a targeted case review process to identify discrepancies between the Level of Need output of the tool and the recommendation of the child's team. Agencies are able to submit such discrepancies to DCF staff and a rationale as to what Level of Need the team believes the child actually should be and why. This information will be reviewed with Dr. John Lyons with input from the Out-of-Home Care Committee to determine if any of the items identified in the Level of Need algorithm need to be modified. The Level of Need output is only one factor to consider in placement decisions, so it is highly probable there will continue to be instances where the child's team determines a placement above or below the assessed Level of Need is most appropriate for the child. Other states who have implemented the CANS tool to inform placement decisions continue to have an element where placement decisions can be made outside of a recommendation of the tool.

3. *When the child's Level of Need exceeds the Level of Care of a provider, does the CANS inform case planning to assist the provider to care for the child? Are the plans required when the child's Level of Need exceeds the providers Level of Care actually being implemented as designed?*

The Placement Stability report will be used to review the plans put in place when the Level of Need exceeds the Level of Care of the provider when there is a placement disruption. The QSR focus groups with foster parents and workers will also include questions that are asked regarding such plans and whether or not they are assisting the provider to care for the child. This information will be reviewed by division staff to determine if patterns exist in cases where disruptions occur. If patterns exist the division will review the patterns for an appropriate response whether it is with a case worker, agency or system wide.

4. *Are agencies using the CANS information to make placement decisions? Are the identified needs of children and families improving communication and case planning? Are sufficient supports in place to assist OHC providers to meet the child's needs, including foster care rates?*

The Placement Stability report will be used to review if appropriate matches are being made, when a child is placed with a provider whether the Level of Care exceeds or is lower than the child's Level of Need, whether or not placements are disrupted and whether or not children's placements are changed after a CANS. In addition, the QSR focus groups with workers and foster parents will include questions regarding how/if the agency is using the CANS to inform placement decisions, supports to the caregivers, and case planning. This information will be reviewed by division staff to determine if patterns exist as to why agencies are or are not using the results of the tool to inform placement decisions, case planning, and supports to caregivers. This information will also be used as input into the way CANS is incorporated into the integrated case plan.

5. *Is the completion of a CANS increasing the likelihood of a placement change?*

The Placement Stability report will review whether or not changes in placement are made directly after a CANS is completed leading to increased instability. If this is occurring, the division will establish whether patterns exist to determine the appropriate response whether from the case worker, agency or system wide.

6. *Is placement stability improving?*

The division will review the Placement Stability Report and PIP outcome measures to determine if there are any changes to placement stability in order to establish if additional changes need to be made to improve placement stability.

B. **CANS Identification of Needs of Children and Parents – Service Array to Improve Well-Being {PIP Requirement}**

1. *Are the mental health, physical health, and educational needs of children and families identified?*
The Child and Parent Needs Analysis report will provide specific information regarding the mental health, physical health and educational needs of children and parents. The report will also generate if conditions exist on their own or are co-occurring. This information will be used to assess what service needs exist for children placed in out-of home care.

2. *Are the services available sufficient for children and families identified needs?*
A review of existing services will occur through assistance with DHS and DPI resources and service array information. DCF will review service array survey from previous work with counties and update that information. Services available and the children and families who need those services will be mapped out statewide to identify gaps in service provision. The division will evaluate the results and develop recommendations through the Out-of-Home Care Committee for improving the provision of well-being services to children and families. This will include identification of existing barriers, resource development needs, and how best to improve alignment of service array with the needs of children and their parents.

III. **Improve Consistency of Foster Care Licensing Practices Statewide {PIP Requirement}**

Agencies across Wisconsin who license foster homes according to Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code will license families consistently regardless of jurisdiction and will only show variance in practice as allowed by law.

A. **Foster Care Licensing Decisions and Timeliness**

In order to answer any of the proceeding questions related to foster care licensure with accuracy, the division needs to ensure that licensing decisions are being made timely and data entry of such decisions are being made timely. The Licensing Monitoring report will provide information regarding licensing decision results, for withdrawals and denials it will also provide code citation explanations. It will provide reasons for closures, data entry information, and will allow agencies to monitor all types of foster homes (including COKC cases). The division will be working with BRO staff to integrate all of the reports into regional supervisor meetings and with private child placing agencies to determine if technical assistance plans to ensure the timeliness and consistency of licensing decisions are needed. When plans are needed DCF staff will work with the agency involved or statewide to improve the timeliness and consistency of licensing decisions.

B. **Use of Exceptions and Waivers**

The division will continue to monitor and review the use of Exceptions and Waivers to Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code through the report developed. DCF will report to the federal government on a yearly basis the specific use of Waivers with relative caregivers. Division staff will review to see if patterns exist to see if technical assistance or modifications to administrative code need to occur.

C. **Foster Parent Training**

The division will review the completion of mandated foster parent training to ensure that foster parents are meeting the requirements at each Level of Care certification. The Foster Parent Training Monitoring report and the Learning Management System will be used to determine if foster parents are completing the required training. A separate evaluation plan has been developed to review the efficacy and delivery of training.

D. **Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting (UFCR)**

The division will review the changes made to the UFCR setting process to be able to analyze the following:

1. *Have the average foster care rates changed, including review of the average Supplemental and Exceptional rates prior to and after the implementation of Phase 2 of LOC? If yes, are they higher or lower and which portions of the rates have changed?*
2. *What is the average foster care rate by Level of Need and by Level of Care certification?*
3. *Is the algorithm for Supplemental Points sufficient?*
4. *Is the value of a Supplemental Point sufficient?*
5. *Which items are most often being considered for Supplemental Points?*
6. *When an Exceptional Rate is established, is the agency using appropriate justifications?*
7. *Are agencies adhering to the "Holdharmless Provision" requirement in licensing code for placements that existed prior to 2/21/2011?*
8. *Are agencies using the "Transportation to School of Origin" item of the Exceptional portion of the rate?*

The Out-of-Home Care Rate report will be used to provide data for analysis post implementation of the LOC initiative and the report created to inform the LOC changes prior to the implementation will be used for comparison. At the October 2011 Out-of-Home Care Committee meeting this information will be reviewed with the committee and the Out-of-Home Care Committee will provide recommendations to DCF related to the changes in the UFCR in terms of any modifications, additional resources, training or technical assistance needed.

Progress on Evaluation and Sharing of Information

The division will provide an update on the evaluation plan, including data to the Out-of-Home Care Committee at the October 2011 meeting and will provide a presentation and user training of the reports at the PAW-TAW in November to child welfare professionals, FFTA WI chapter, and others as requested. A final evaluation report for the PIP related items will be generated as agreed to in the PIP. On the next pages is a list of the reports that are created or being created that will supply administrative date for the evaluation. The division will also be collecting qualitative data through case review and focus groups.

LOC Phase 1	Report Name	Evaluates	Status of Report	Completed		Presentations	PIP Q

	Conversion of COKC to FC for cases in existence on 12/31/2009	▪ Timeliness of decisions
		▪ Licensing Decision Results:
		  ▪ Licensed (including Level of Care), denied, withdrawn
		  ▪ For withdrawals and denials provides explanation
			Completed	*2010*		*Completed*	*N/A*

	Use of Exceptions and Waivers	▪ Provides counts of Exceptions and Waivers granted ▪ Including those granted for relatives who are licensed foster parents	*Completed*	*2010*		*Completed*	*N/A*
LOC Phase 2	**Report Name**	**Evaluates**	**Status of Report**	**Completed**	**OHC/CP Volunteers for Report Development/Testing**	**Presentations**	**PIP Q**

	Foster Home Licensing Monitoring Report	▪ Timeliness of licensing decisions
		▪ Licensing Decision Results:
		  ▪ Licensed (including Level of Care), renewals, denied, revoked, and withdrawn
		  ▪ For withdrawals and denials provides explanation
		▪ Retention information: reasons FH's discontinue
		▪ Allows to breakout county, worker, relative and non-relative licenses
			In Design	Expected July 2011		Regional Sups June-July
						
						OHC -July
							Q3

	CANS Timeliness	▪ Timeliness of completion ▪ Levels of Need of children, statewide and by county ▪ Mental Health Screen outcomes	In Design	Completed		Regional Sups OHC -July	Q4

	Uniform Foster Care Rates	▪ Average payment prior to 2/21//2011 and average payments after 2/21/2011 ▪ Breakout LON, age, rates with specific information on Supplemental, Exceptional, and Total Payment averages ▪ Be able to look at statewide data and county specific data	TBD	Early Fall 2011		OHC – TBD Regional Sups-TBD	N/A
	CANS Placement Stability	▪ Provider LOC/Child LON value ▪ When LOC<LON placement stability in each month of placement will be reviewed ▪ (we may be able to modify current stability measure for this)	In Design	Expected by Fall 2011		PAW TAW OTHERS?	
	CANS Child Specific and Parental Outcomes	▪ Well-being indicators upon entry into care and at six month intervals ▪ Children's identified Needs specific to Education, Physical Health, and Mental Health ▪ Parental functioning at time of child placement and at six month intervals ▪ Look regionally and locally at Needs of parents and children to assess service provision needs and resources	In Queue	Expected by October 2011		PAW TAW OTHERS?	Q5
	Foster Parent Training	▪ Completion of required training for foster parents at all levels: statewide and by licensing agencies	TBD	TBD		OHC –TBD FP Training Comm-TBD	

Each report will be run monthly and can be run on-demand for specific timeframes. In addition, the reports sort statewide information by county agency and licensing agency. DSP is working with the Bureau of Regional Operations to integrate the reports into supervisory meetings.